

Task Force Betio Marines decorated for Iraqi liberation, An Nasiriya battle

Story and Photos by Cpl. G. Lane Miley

CAMP LEMONIER, Djibouti—Marines deployed here providing force protection to the camp received recognition for their actions nearly a year ago during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Seventeen infantrymen from Task Force Betio were recognized with citations ranging from certificates of commendation to Navy Commendation Medals with combat distinguishing devices during awards ceremonies here Jan. 24 and 25.

Last year these warriors deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of Task Force Tarawa. There they em-

ployed infantry tactics while maneuvering from Kuwait across the Iraqi sands participating in numerous skirmishes including the Battle of An Nasiriya.

"I did what I had to do. I probably did what any other Marine would have done," Lance Cpl. Logan M. Welker said.

According to Task Force Betio's first sergeant, 1st Sgt. Don D. Brazeal, these Marines' heroic deeds deserved much higher recognition, but they come from a very humble bat-

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Not pictured, but also award recipients are Sgts. Lathan E. Thurman, Christopher M. Reith, Michael D. Bradley and Rudy S. Ontiveros; Cpl. Manuel R. Andrade and Lance Cpl. Steven A. White.



Decorated veterans (front row, left to right) are 1st Sgt. Don D. Brazeal, 1st. Lt. Jon T. Widman, Gunnery Sgt. Tuan V. Pham, Staff Sgt. Jeremy R. Lundgren, Capt. Charles R. Cassidy. On humvee, kneeling are Cpls. Michael J. Ahern, Agustin L. Gonzalez, Kevin J. Fisher. Standing are Lance Cpls. Kristopher C. Borch, Logan M. Welker and Cpl. Michael A. Hastillo. Each of these Marines was decorated for their actions during the Battle of An Nasiriya in Iraq last year.